

Wharton State Forest Motorized Access Plan Stakeholder Meetings October 2015



Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- Meeting Format Description and Explanation
- Clearing Up Misconceptions
- Presentation of Motorized Access Plan Goals and Objectives
- Base Map Access Exercise
- Group Discussion
- Summarize

Current Conditions - Facts

- Closed Roads
- Geocaching
- Kayak Access to the Mullica
- Dead Ends
- Carsonite sign

What is the Problem?

- The increasing popularity of motorized recreation in New Jersey has presented challenges for the management of public lands and the protection of natural and cultural resources. This unmanaged usage has caused extensive damage to sensitive natural areas and infrastructure with no provision for protection and restoration; has diminished the use and enjoyment of our public lands by other user groups; has diverted resources from other resource protection priorities; and has created potential hazards to the various user groups and administrative staff, including law enforcement personnel.
- The Division of Parks and Forestry promotes recreation activities which are sustainable within the natural and cultural resources in the care of the Department. Motorized recreation may be a sustainable recreational activity when appropriate precautions are taken to manage the amount, time and location of this activity.

Definitions

- Motorized Recreation – the operation of motorized vehicles where the motor vehicle is the primary component of the recreation; as opposed to transportation.
- Motorized Access – the operation of a motor vehicle to transport one to and from one area to another, or to and from another form of recreation such as hunting, camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, birdwatching, etc.

Natural Area Definition

- Natural area means an area of land or water, owned in fee simple or held as a conservation easement by the department, which has retained its natural character, although not necessarily completely undisturbed or having rare or vanishing species or plant or animal life, or having similar features of interest, which are worthy of preservation for present and future residents of the State.

National Recreational Trail Grant Funds

- Wharton State Forest received \$391,511.05 in NRT grant support from their FY2011 funds.
- An additional request of \$100,281.00 from FY 2014 funds has been submitted to the FHWA – *this portion is not yet obligated*
- This totals \$491,792.05 in federal funds. The grant requires a 20% match so the total project cost would be \$614,740.06.

NRT Grant Status

Since March 2015:

- Nearly 10 miles of impassable routes have been repaired.
- Approximately 92 miles of routes have been maintained and/or limbed.
- Maintenance efforts are ongoing.
- NRT grant funds were used to purchase road repair materials, labor for repairing roads, and labor for collecting additional GPS data on all roads/trails within the forest.

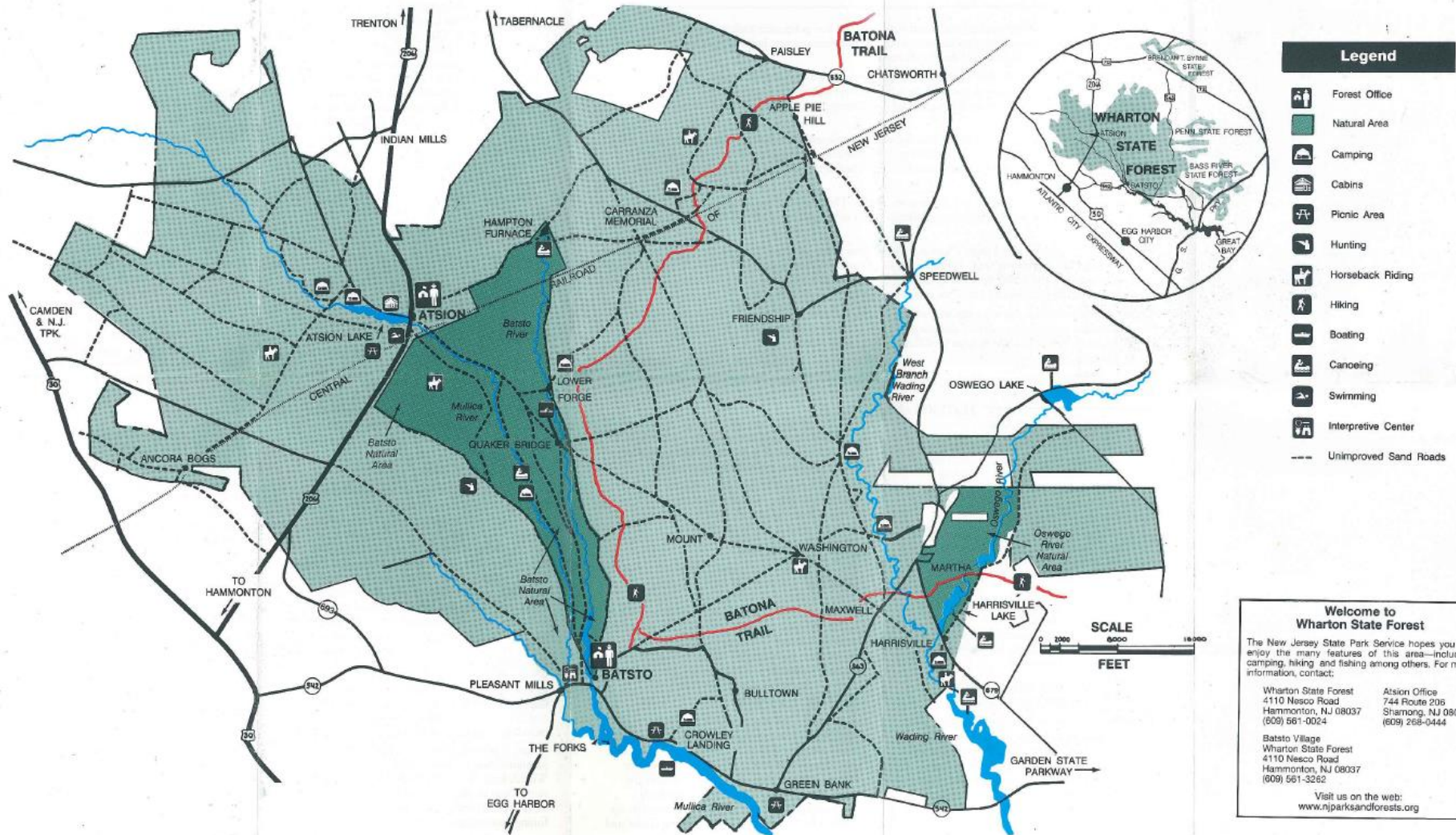
What are the Goals of a Motorized Access Plan?

- Identify routes currently suitable for motorized access
- Improve enforcement and coordination of emergency response and improve public safety
- Focus maintenance efforts
- Improve public awareness of impacts of use and abuse to the forest
- Protect endangered species, habitat and cultural resources while providing for public access
- Compliance with Federal, State and PC regulations

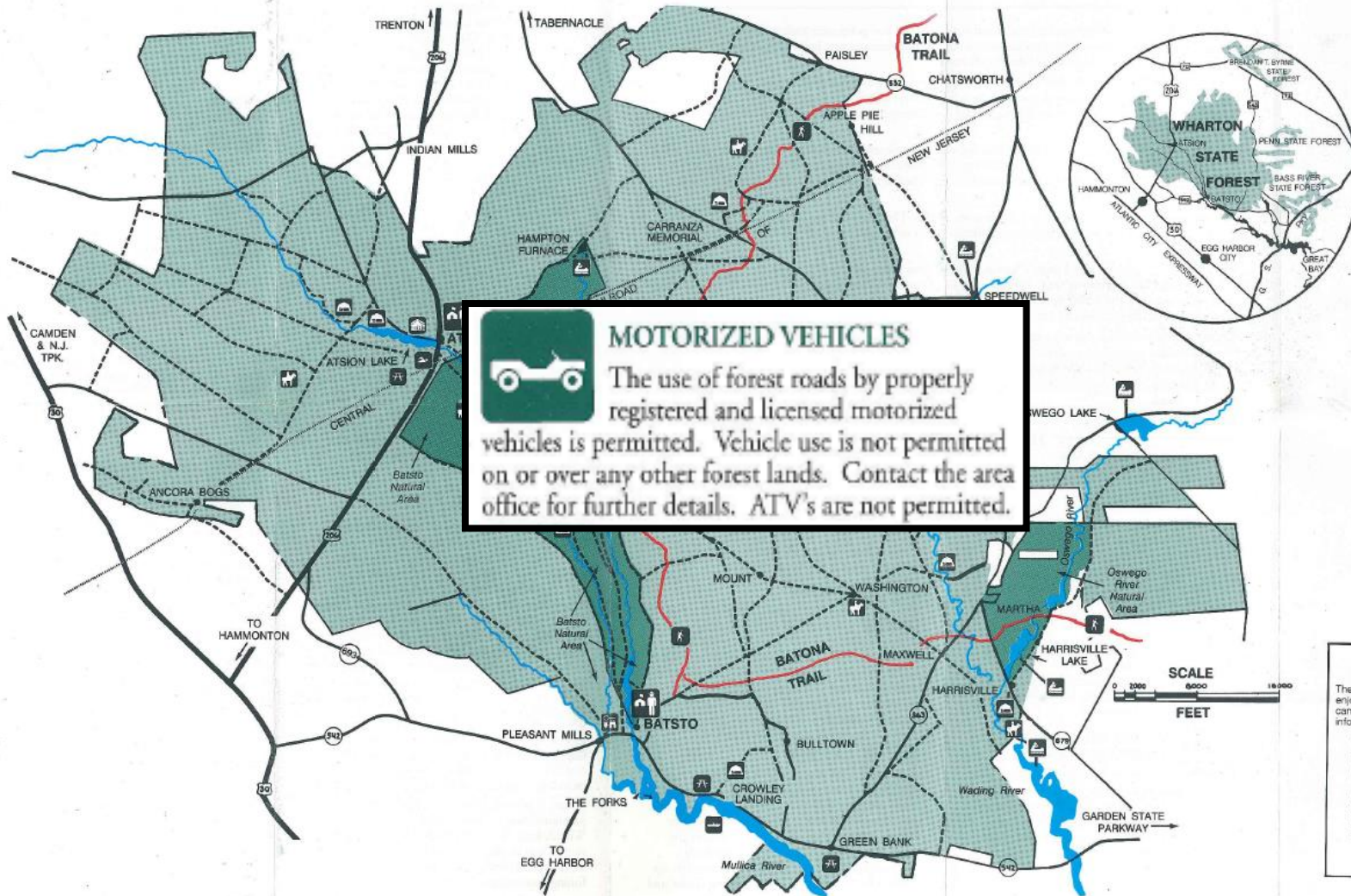
WHARTON STATE FOREST



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MOTORIZED VEHICLES

The use of forest roads by properly registered and licensed motorized vehicles is permitted. Vehicle use is not permitted on or over any other forest lands. Contact the area office for further details. ATV's are not permitted.

Legend

- Forest Office
- Natural Area
- Camping
- Cabins
- Picnic Area
- Hunting
- Horseback Riding
- Hiking
- Boating
- Canoeing
- Swimming
- Interpretive Center
- Unimproved Sand Roads

Welcome to Wharton State Forest

The New Jersey State Park Service hopes you will enjoy the many features of this area—including camping, hiking and fishing among others. For more information, contact:

Wharton State Forest 4110 Nesco Road Hammononton, NJ 08037 (609) 561-0024	Atison Office 744 Route 206 Shamong, NJ 08088 (609) 268-0444
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Visit us on the web:
www.njparksandforests.org

Objective 1: Identify routes currently suitable for motorized access









Objective 2: Improve enforcement and coordination with emergency response





Objective 3: Focus maintenance efforts







Objective 4:

Improve public awareness of impacts use and abuse of the forest

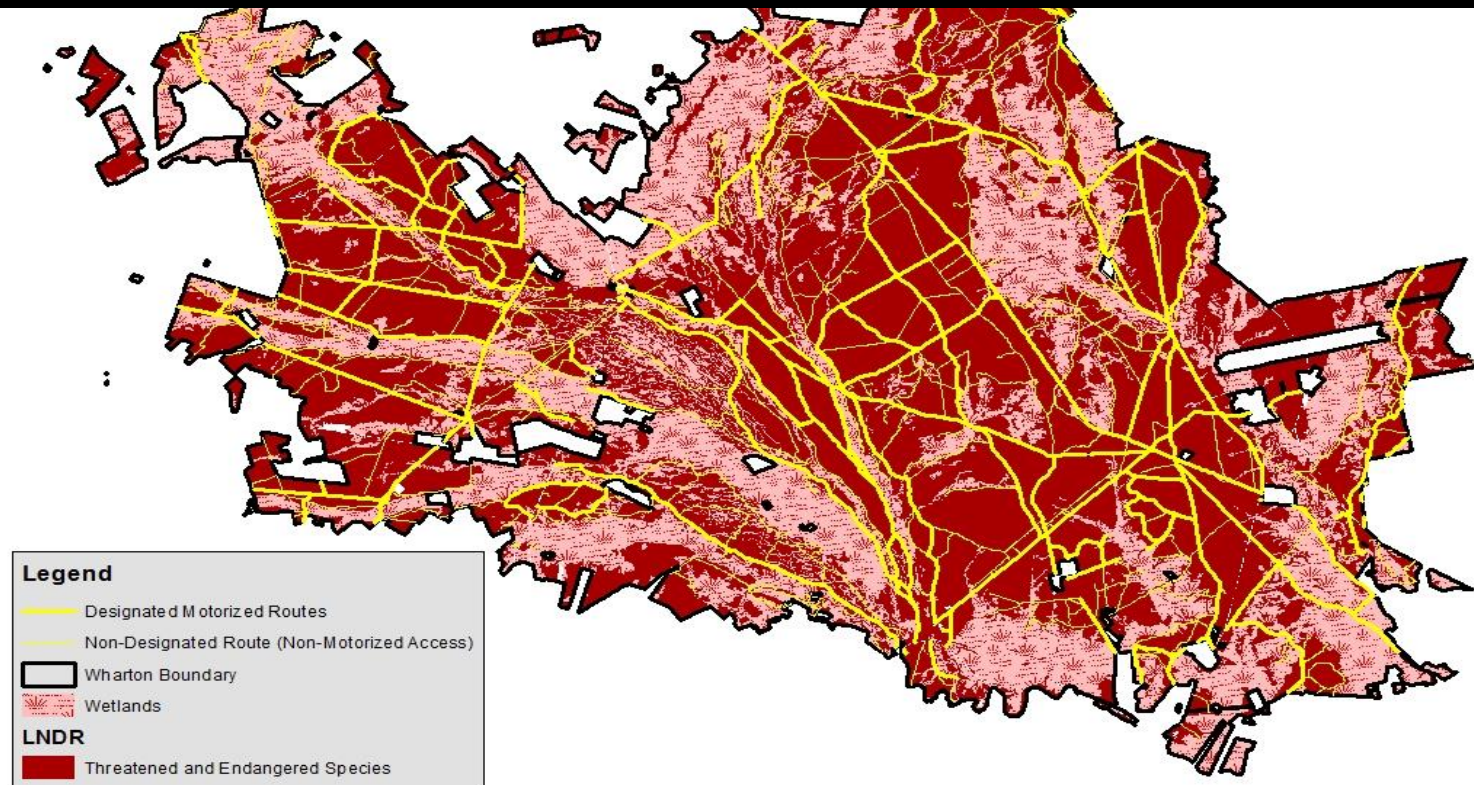








Objective 5: Protect Endangered Species, habitat and cultural resources while providing for public access



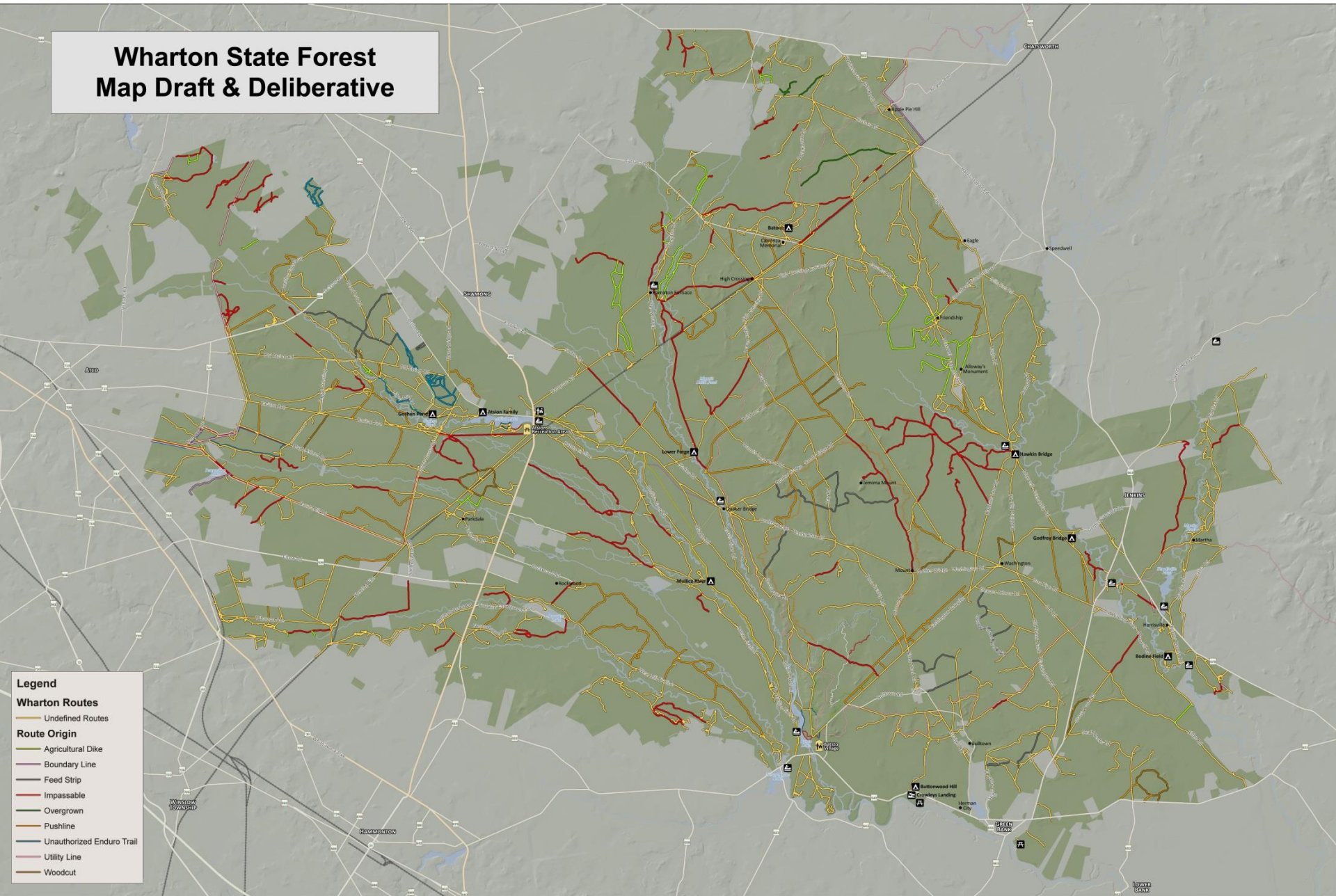






MAP Exercise

Wharton State Forest Map Draft & Deliberative



Next Steps

- Stakeholder process summary
- Public meeting
- Internal review
- Formulate new plan